

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03

INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03 SP-02

CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 NSC-05 SS-15 STR-04

CEA-01 L-03 H-02 PA-01 PRS-01 OES-03 IGA-01 CU-02

AGR-05 /096 W

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R 250625Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 604

C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 6355

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: USTSJC, US

SUBJ: SIGNIFICANCE OF US-TUNISIAN JOINT COMMISSION

REF: TUNIS 6306

1. I WOULD LIKE TO CALL ATTENTION OF SENIOR OFFICIALS IN STATE, COMMERCE, OPIC, AID AND OTHER WASHINGTON AGENCIES CONCERNED WITH TUNISIA, TO TUNIS 6306 ASSESSING SECOND SESSION OF US-TUNISIAN JOINT COMMISSION HELD IN TUNIS OCT 17-20. WE BELIEVE SERIES OF MEETINGS AND CONTACTS ESTABLISHED DURING SESSION MADE POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO OUR BILATERAL POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC INTERESTS HERE. THEY MAY ALSO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO OUR EFFORTS TO GAIN BETTER UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT BY TUNISIANS OF OUR POSITION ON GLOBAL ECONOMIC ISSUES.

2. DESPITE TUNISIAN DISAPPOINTMENT OVER OUR INABILITY TO INCREASE AID PROGRAM IN RESPONSE TO TUNISIAN REQUESTS, WE BELIEVE THAT COMMISSION AS A WHOLE WENT VERY WELL. TUNISIANS--SOME FOR PERHAPS FIRST TIME--WERE MADE AWARE OF OTHER FORMS OF UNOFFICIAL ASSISTANCE TO TUNISIA, AND
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WE BELIEVE WE MADE PROGRESS IN GAINING ACCEPTANCE OF

POTENTIAL VALUE OF TRADE AND INVESTMENT AT THIS STAGE OF TUNISIA'S ECONOMIC GROWTH. TUNISIANS REGRETTED BUT UNDERSTOOD LAST-MINUTE CANCELLATION OF VISIT BY UNDER SECRETARY ROBINSON. IMPORTANCE WE ATTACHED TO SESSION AND CONSTRUCTIVE PARTICIPATION BY OTHER SENIOR US OFFICIALS SEEM TO HAVE CONVINCED TUNISIANS OF OUR GOOD FAITH AND DESIRE TO STRENGTHEN EVEN FURTHER OUR COOPERATIVE RELATIONS BUT IN NEW DIRECTIONS.

3. WHILE SOME TUNISIANS VIEW JOINT COMMISSION PRIMARILY AS A FORUM FOR DISCUSSION OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, KEY OFFICIALS ATTACH SPECIAL IMPORTANCE TO ITS POLITICAL DIMENSIONS. IN PREPARED REMARKS AT CLOSING PLENARY SESSION, TUNISIAN CHAIRMAN ADVERTED TO THE HIGH LEVEL OF AMERICAN REPRESENTATION AT THE MEETINGS AS CARRYING POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE. OTHER GOT OFFICIALS INVOLVED IN MEETINGS HAVE IN SUBSEQUENT CONVERSATIONS MADE POINT OF FACT THAT, ALTHOUGH MOST OF THE CONTENT OF COMMISSION TALKS WAS ECONOMIC, THE SERIOUSNESS OF PURPOSE AND THE GOOD WILL MANIFESTED BY PARTICIPANTS REFLECTED CLOSE BILATERAL POLITICAL RELATIONS AND HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THEIR FURTHER STRENGTHENING. WHILE ONE WOULD EXPECT THIS KIND OF LANGUAGE IN FORMAL SESSIONS AND SPEECHES, WE ARE GRATIFIED TO HEAR IT IN PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS.

4. MAINTAINING GOOD ATMOSPHERE CREATED DURING JOINT COMMISSION MEETINGS IS IN OUR LONG-RANGE INTEREST AND PROBABLY CAN BE ACHIEVE AT RELATIVELY LITTLE COST OF USG RESOURCES. WE HOPE VARIOUS NEXT STEPS ON NEW AND PENDING BILATERAL AID PROGRAMS DISCUSSED DURING SESSION CAN BE EXPEDITED AND THAT WE CAN BE AS FORTHCOMING AS POSSIBLE ON SUCH MATTERS AS GOT REQUESTED PL-480 TITLE I WHEAT AND HOUSING INVESTMENT GUARANTEE. POSITIVE FOLLOW-UP ON TRADE AND INVESTMENT MATTERS AS RESULT OF COMMISSION WORK WILL ALSO CONTRIBUTE TO BROADENING OUR COOPERATIVE RELATIONS, HELP TUNISIAN DEVELOPMENT AND ADVANCE DIRECTLY US ECONOMIC EXPORT OBJECTIVES. FURTHERMORE, VISIT TO TUNISIA BY UNDER SECRETARY ROBINSON AS CONTEMPLATED IN MOSCOW 14975 WOULD MAKE IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION TO MAINTAINING MOMENTUM GENERATED BY JOINT

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, COMMITTEE MEETINGS, INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 OCT 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: KelleyW0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975TUNIS06355
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750372-0118
From: TUNIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751018/aaaaaqbu.tel
Line Count: 109
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 TUNIS 6306
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: KelleyW0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <18 JUN 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <03 NOV 2003 by KelleyW0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SIGNIFICANCE OF US-TUNISIAN JOINT COMMISSION
TAGS: PFOR, EGEN, US, USTSJC
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006